

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
Maundy Thursday  
April 9, 2020

For You!  
Luke 22:19

*Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”*

**Before you start reading the sermon take a piece of bread and a small glass of wine and set it before you, so that at the end of the sermon you can celebrate Holy Communion with me. I will have blessed everyone’s bread and wine from my home.**

“Words that last forever.” That has been the topic of our weekly meditations throughout this Lenten season. Words that last forever. The seven words from the cross are surely such, words that deserve the fame they have received, words that deserve to be heard and repeated year after year, season after season.

And so, we have spent time with them this Lententide. Along with those seven words, there are some other words from the lips of Jesus that are repeated even more often. The Lord’s prayer, for example. It is safe to say that at any given moment of every day, somewhere in the world someone is uttering those words of Jesus, “Our Father, who art in heaven...”

The words we consider this Maundy Thursday are also words from the lips of our Lord that are repeated frequently – week by week certainly in the worship of God’s people, and in many places even day by day. They are the words spoken by our Lord: “*On the night in which he was betrayed...*”

Whenever we hear THOSE words in our worship, we always know what is coming next, for they have become a deeply embedded part of our liturgy. And more – part of our LIFE, our very existence as the children of God.

Jesus took bread... not a new or uncommon activity...but to the bread he added words: “*This is my body, given...FOR YOU.*” Those words strike at the very heart of the matter. The cup likewise, was offered as “...my blood poured out for many” – “Drink of it, all of you” – for this is the Savior’s precious gift...FOR YOU.

Yes, this truly is the very heart of the matter...words spoken from the Lord’s heart...to our hearts. Given and shed...FOR YOU.

On the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ took not only bread and wine, but took what was happening to him, what he was doing and enduring according to the heavenly Father’s will, and made it universal, a death for all – for all sins, for all the world, for all time and at the same time made it very personal: Given and shed...FOR YOU.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread and wine because those were among the items at hand that evening. For even before our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, this was not just another meal like every other. No, this was a night steeped in history. Passover. The night on which the Lord ACTED to save his people from all that held them captive and oppressed.

FOR YOU was the way the chosen people have always heard the story, and continue to hear it even today, for all the centuries that have intervened.  
FOR YOU.

For this is not ancient history, but this is OUR story. WE were enslaved in the land of Egypt...” Go, select lambs for your families.” “*And the Lord God delivered US.*” “And slaughter the Passover lamb.” “*With mighty hand and outstretched arm.*” “Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood.”

Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. “*The Lord will pass over that door and will not*

*allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down.” “I shall not die but live, and recount the deeds of the Lord...Only watch and see what the Lord will do...FOR YOU.”*

*FOR YOU.* Thus in the celebration of Passover, the past, God’s great acts of salvation, constantly brought into the present...”WE were slaves, and the Lord delivered US...are now made even more personal by the LAMB of God who takes away the sin of the world, whose body sustains us and whose blood offers protection and deliverance.

*“This is my body, given FOR YOU. This is the NEW covenant in my blood, poured out FOR YOU.”* Words from the past become words for the present: “Given and shed...FOR YOU.”

Yet even as the message of this evening rests soundly on the past, on God’s great saving acts for his people throughout history, at the same time Jesus takes history into his hands and turns it to the future. “A foretaste of the things to come.” For these are words that last FOREVER.

*“If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”* FOR YOU. *“I have said these things that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”*

*OUR joy, complete. How so? “I go to prepare a place for you.”* FOR YOU.

*“And I will come and take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”* Words spoken this evening that have their focus on eternity. For these are words that last FOREVER.

In the light of eternity, then, perhaps we can hear the Seven Words from the cross as personal pledges from the Lord. “Forgive them, Jesus said, - FOR YOU.

He made the promise then “Today you will be with me in paradise” FOR YOU.

“Behold your son, behold, your mother” uniting people in their needs – FOR YOU.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Christ was forsaken then – FOR YOU. And thirsted – FOR YOU. And finished all that he was sent to do – FOR YOU.

And now – with THAT history, the message of the cross of Christ, as a part of the history of all the might acts - as the fulfillment and climax of all God’s might saving acts – the Father’s hands await, in answer to the Savior’s prayer.

The future beckons, a future that will have no end. Beyond even the cross and suffering, the tomb waits to discharge what it cannot hold, waits to offer up its divine cargo alive once more - FOR YOU.

Past and future come together in this present where Christ is present, truly present in the bread and wine with forgiving power and love, crystalized in bread and cup – FOR YOU.

Other things about this day, as you have so far experienced it, may fade and be forgotten, but with this bread and cup are offered promises that will not fail., anchored in the death of Jesus Christy and guaranteed by his resurrection – FOR YOU.

So, listen and believe this night. Hear the words the Savior speaks as bread and cup are offered once again – FOR YOU. For these ARE “Words That Last FOREVER!” **Prepare for Holy Communion**

Pastor: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

The Body of Christ, broken **for you!** The blood of Christ shed **for you!**

And now may this body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's Grace.

Let us Pray:

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united yourself with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**People: Amen!**